United Nations A/60/126(Part I)/Add.2

General Assembly

Distr.: General
27 October 2005
English
Original: Arabic

Sixtieth session
Agenda items 94 and 100

Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East

Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum*

Contents

		Page
III.	Replies received from Governments	2
	Egypt	2

* This reply was received after the submission of the main report.

05-57587 (E) 011105

III. Replies received from Governments

Egypt

[24 October 2005]

1. Egypt's commitment to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is unquestionable. It was at the request of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Egypt that the item entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East" was first inscribed on the agenda of the General Assembly in 1974. Since that date, the Assembly has annually adopted a resolution, by consensus since 1980, on this matter. Throughout the years, Egypt has continued to play a consistently leading role in promoting the objective of ridding the Middle East of the threat of nuclear weapons.

2. As a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and a signatory to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Pelindaba Treaty), Egypt has clearly and unambiguously demonstrated its rejection of the nuclear option, since it represents a major threat to peace, security and stability in the Middle East. Today, Egypt notes that while all States of the Middle East have become parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Israel regrettably persists in ignoring repeated calls for its adherence to the Treaty and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, thereby perpetuating a dangerous imbalance in the region.

3. The importance given during the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is a testimony to the commitment of the international community to the establishment of such a zone. The 2000 Review Conference, in following up the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty, unanimously reaffirmed, in its final document, the importance of the accession of Israel to the Treaty and placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards. Indeed, in its final document, the 2000 Review Conference:

> "... recalls that paragraph 4 of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East the Conference 'calls upon all States in the Middle East that have not yet done so, without exception, to accede to the Treaty as soon as possible and to place their nuclear facilities under full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards'. The Conference notes, in this connection, that the report of the United Nations Secretariat on the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East (NPT/CONF.2000/7) states that several States have acceded to the Treaty and that, with these accessions, all States of the region of the Middle East, with the exception of Israel, are States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Conference welcomes the accession of those States and reaffirms the importance of Israel's accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards, in realizing the goal of universal adherence to the Treaty in the Middle East". (NPT/CONF.2000/28 (Parts I and II), part I, sect. entitled "Article VII", para. 16)

4. Egypt is cognizant of the fact that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is a difficult task. Indeed, each region of the world has its own characteristics, and each zone must be tailored to suit those characteristics. However, Egypt does not share the view that full-scale peace and fully developed political and economic relations among all States of the region are a prerequisite for the commencement of negotiations on the establishment of a zone. If such an argument were correct, it is unlikely that the Treaty of Tlatelolco or even the Treaty of Pelindaba would ever have been negotiated. Regrettably, conflict continues to rage in various parts of Africa to this very day, yet such conflicts were not invoked as reasons to prevent negotiations on an African nuclear-weapon-free zone. To Egypt, experience has shown that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in areas of tension and conflict does indeed contribute to easing tensions, preventing conflicts and developing peaceful relations and mutual cooperation.

5. For a nuclear-weapon-free zone to come about in any area of the world, there must exist a regional commitment to this objective. As is testified to by the annual adoption of a consensus resolution on the Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone by the General Assembly, and by the adoption of consensus guidelines on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States of the region concerned, by the Disarmament Commission at its 1999 substantive session, such a commitment is present in the Middle East. In this connection, Egypt notes with satisfaction that there is agreement that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and the development of a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction should be encouraged. Egypt considers that it is imperative that those commitments be turned into concrete actions if they are to have a determining and positive impact on the Middle East peace process.

6. However, and while Egypt continues to table its annual resolution entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", it cannot help but notice that the resolution's adoption by consensus is not complemented by an equally consensual commitment to its implementation. Indeed, not all of the States Members of the United Nations seem committed to acting effectively with a view to ridding the Middle East of nuclear weapons. Few concrete steps, if any, have been taken with the aim of realizing the objectives of the resolution. This situation endures despite the international community's invigorated commitment to the cause of non-proliferation in the world following the criminal and tragic events of 11 September 2001.

7. Making negotiations on a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone contingent upon an ever-growing list of prerequisites is a sure recipe for failure. In Egypt's view, the only prerequisite for negotiations to commence on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East is that States in the region have the political will to sit together and commence negotiations. Viewing the Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone as no more than an act that "sets the seal on a durable peace" is not a vision that is shared by Egypt. A Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone is, in and of itself, an important confidence-building measure and an act of political reconciliation. Furthermore, maintaining that fully fledged relations of peace must exist before talks on such a zone can commence, while at the same time persisting to maintain a nuclear option, are two mutually exclusive and contradictory arguments. In a region as volatile as the Middle East, no solid and durable peace can be achieved while a nuclear threat continues to loom over the region.

8. The international community has given much attention to recent cases of proliferation concern, sometimes seeking new approaches, and always devoting significant resources to the task. Yet, Israel escapes similar attention, and is subjected to little more than lukewarm verbal calls for adherence to the Treaty and application of IAEA safeguards.

9. Egypt will continue to pursue the objective of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East at the earliest date, based on the outcome of the 2000 Review Conference. It will also pursue its April 1990 initiative for the establishment, in the Middle East, of a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction. In its endeavours, it will continue to seek the support of the international community and of all those who are committed to ridding the world, both at the regional and global levels, of the threat of nuclear weapons. In this regard, the following developments have taken place since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 59/63.

10. The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs, in coordination with the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, chaired by Hans Blix, hosted a symposium on the subject of the elimination of weapons of mass destruction from the Middle Eastern perspective on 29 and 30 January 2005. During the symposium, Egypt sought to emphasize the priority which it accords to the matter of the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and the initiative of the Chairman in that regard.

11. With a delegation headed by the Deputy Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, Egypt participated in the conference on nuclear-weapon-free zones that was organized by Mexico during the period 26-28 April 2005. The Egyptian participation in this conference was based on emphasizing the important role played by the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in promoting international peace and security, as well as the fact that the establishment of such zones offers the ideal framework for dealing with regional security issues and could be beneficial to the Middle East region.

12. The forty-ninth session of the IAEA General Conference, held during the period 26-30 September 2005, adopted by consensus the annual resolution submitted by Egypt on the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East. The resolution provides for, inter alia, the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

13. Egypt endeavoured to convene the symposium on the Middle East called for by the IAEA Director-General. Despite the flexibility which it showed, however, the convening of the symposium had been prevented by the disagreement over the agenda.

14. The President of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons visited Egypt in 2005 in the context of the preparations for the Conference. Egypt was keen to explain the importance which it attaches to implementation of the outcomes achieved during the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and the 2000 Review Conference in connection with the resolution on the Middle East and the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

15. Egypt presented a working paper to the 2005 Review Conference in which it set forth its views on the subject of the establishment of such a zone.

16. The Technical Committee of the League of Arab States tasked with preparing a draft treaty to turn the Middle East into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, continued its work, having held two meetings in January and June 2005.